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ABSTRACT

Questions concerning the relationship between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO) were explored in a study of determinants of exposure to national network television evening news programs. The categories of gratifications, derived from a number of studies of television and political news, were (1) general information seeking, (2) decisional utility, (3) entertainment, (4) interpersonal utility, and (5) parasocial interaction. Telephone interviews were obtained from 327 heads of household in Lexington, Kentucky, with phone numbers selected through random sampling. GS and GO were measured by responses to 15 items, and six factor analyses were performed to examine the dimensions of GS and GO and the dimensions of GO for certain subsamples developed according to viewing preference. Findings led to three major conclusions: first, individual GS are moderately to strongly related to corresponding GO; second, the degree of dependence on a particular program is positively related to the strength of the GS/GO relationship; and third, the dimensions of GS and GO from television news differ and are due to general within-program characteristics such as use of videotape and eye contact. Other indications were that entertainment and parasocial interaction are independent motives for television news viewing, and that viewers may distinguish two values of TV news information, for decision making and for social information. (A list of the 15 GS items is appended.) (AEA)

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RELATIONS BETWEEN GRATIFICATIONS SOUGHT AND GRATIFICATIONS OBTAINED: A STUDY OF TELEVISION NEWS

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INTRODUCTION

Paralleling its recent popularity, uses and gratifications research has been the focus of considerable criticism. Critics have attacked the approach from a number of often conflicting points of view. They have suggested that it suffers from theoretical shortcomings inherent in functionalism (Carey and Kreiling, 1974; Elliot, 1974), is atheoretical (Elliot, 1974; Weiss, 1976; Swanson, 1977), and is beset by serious conceptual problems (Swanson, 1977). The approach is, of course, not without its defenders, and there is a lively debate over various conceptual and methodological issues (see, for example, the January, 1979 issue of Communication Research devoted entirely to uses and gratifications).

There appears to be some merit in the positions of both sides. On the one hand, to condemn uses and gratifications research as "atheoretical" stems from a rather narrow definition of theory. We agree with Blumler that while there may be no such thing as a or the uses and gratifications theory:

> ...there are plenty of theories about uses and gratifications phenomena, which may well differ with each other over many issues. Together, they will share a common field of concern, an elementary set of concepts indispensable for intelligibly carving up that terrain, and an identification of certain wider features of the mass communication process which such core phenomena are presumed to be connected. Rival theories may generate conflicting predictions about how those phenomena are empirically associated, but we should not be dismayed by or critical of their profusion and variety (Blumler, 1979, pp. 11, 12).

On the other hand, there is no denying that the approach suffers from its share of conceptual difficulties. One of the most pressing

seems to be the failure of most studies to distinguish either conceptually or empirically between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. As outlined by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), "In principle, a distinction may be drawn between a) expectations about content formed in advance of exposure and b) satisfaction subsequently secured from consumption of it. In practice, however, research workers have indiscriminately approached these phenomena from both ends" (p.25). Greenberg (1974) has also distinguished between "gratifications sought "and" gratifications received," and argues that, with present methodologies, "one cannot distinguish whether the response obtained from the viewer of the medium, or a fan of some specific content, is an accurate statement of what he wanted, or what he thinks he got...no approach has so far dealt with the parallelism or discrepancy between what was sought and what was obtained" (p.89).[1] More recently, Lometti, et al. (1977) also note that "the exact relationship between gratifications sought and actual gratifications has not been investigated. Do they become equivalent through some trial-and-error learning process, where over time one knows what to expect from a given channel and subsequently receives it?" (p.337).

Recently Palmgreen and Rayburn (1978, 1979) incorporated measures of both sought and obtained gratifications in a study of exposure to public television. Their model, which took into account the discrepancy between gratifications sought and obtained, successfully discriminated between viewers and nonviewers of public television across a range of gratifications. In addition, among those who ordinarily made their own decisions concerning which programs to watch, the discrepancy measure

emerged as the second strongest predictor of public television viewing; stronger, in fact, than a number of traditional demographic correlates of such viewing. Their findings lend support to their contention that "The distinction between gratifications sought and obtained...emerges as a crucial one in an area of central concern to the uses and gratifications approach--media consumption--and seems no less relevant to questions concerning the effects of such consumption" (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1978, p.4).

The Relationship Between Gratifications Sought and Obtained

While Palmgreen and Rayburn demonstrated the utility of incorporating both sought and obtained measures in a single model, they did not carry out an extensive exploration of the relationship between gratifications sought and obtained. This would seem to be a crucial first step in developing a uses and gratifications theory per se, not just in constructing another theoretical approach to uses and gratifications phenomena. The theory would focus on explaining how the connection between gratifications sought and obtained is related to such variables as media and content selection, levels of exposure, media dependency, and media effects.

Two major questions serve as a starting point for investigating the relationship between gratifications sought and obtained. First, what is the nature of the relationship between each individual sought gratification and its corresponding obtained measure? And secondly, are the dimensions of gratifications sought from a particular medium, content type, or program the same as the dimensions of gratifications perceived to be obtained? With respect to the first question, the functional

underpinnings of the uses and gratifications approach would suggest that the relationship between a particular gratification sought and its respective obtained measure is as depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1

A particular gratification sought by an individual, since it is partially based on expectations about content or media-related satisfactions to be derived from consumption, will influence the nature of the gratifications perceived to be obtained upon actual consumption. Such perceived gratifications obtained are not, however, totally based on preconceptions but are sensitive to "actual" content or media characteristics; thus they will feed back to influence gratifications sought. Over time we would expect such feedback processes to result in a rather strong relationship between sought and obtained measures for a particular gratification as long as the seeking behavior is reinforced. We would not, however, expect isomorphism. Such equivalence could only result from the rare circumstances of a particular medium or content type furnishing perfect satisfaction of a particular need.

Second, are the dimensions of gratifications sought from a particular medium, content type, or program the same as the dimensions of gratifications perceived to be obtained? This question is tied closely to questions of audience perceptions of content and media characteristics and thus is also intimately related to questions of audience satisfaction. Finding a close match between gratifications

sought and obtained at the level of the individual gratification would not necessarily mean a close match between sought and obtained gratification dimensions. For example, viewers of a particular television content genre (e.g., sitcoms) may seek both "entertainment" and "parasocial interaction," (interaction with the characters in the program as if they were real people). Seeking of these two gratifications may be closely related and thus they may appear on the same "dimension" empirically; however, viewers of particular programs within a certain genre may find they are entertained by certain programs which provide little basis for parasocial interaction. This occurs, perhaps, because the characters are unlike "real" people--e.g., "The "Munsters". We would expect, then, that "entertainment" and "parasocial interaction" items would fall on different gratifications obtained dimensions for this type of program.

THE PRESENT STUDY

These two major questions concerning the relationship between gratifications sought and obtained were explored within the context of a study of determinants of exposure to national network television evening news programs. Aside from the importance of the particular substantive area, television news met a number of important criteria facilitating the study of gratifications sought versus obtained. First, the large number of studies dealing with those uses and gratifications connected with political information seeking (some of which deal specifically with television news) provided an invaluable conceptual framework for developing our uses and gratifications measures. Second, the fact that there are three major network news programs with large

viewing audiences afforded the opportunity to directly compare gratifications sought from television news in general with the specific gratifications obtained from each of the programs. We could also investigate differences in the gratification patterns of the regular viewers of the different programs in an attempt to explain program choice (this question will be addressed in a later paper). Third, the topic selected helped resolve the level of abstraction problem discussed by Palmgreen and Rayburn (1978, 1979). They argue that it is difficult to empirically separate gratifications sought from a particular medium (or content type, program, etc.) from gratifications obtained at the same level of abstraction. To use their example, if we attempt to obtain measures of gratifications sought and obtained from "television" (at the same level of abstraction), it may be impossible for respondents to make a meaningful distinction. But when the level of abstraction of the obtained measures is shifted to a component of the medium (content type, etc.) under consideration at the sought level, the problem is greatly reduced. We applied this principle in the present study by obtaining measures of gratifications sought from "television news" in general, and measures of gratifications obtained from specific network news programs.[2]

Uses and Gratifications of Television News

The study of the uses and gratifications of television news programs has its origins in Lasswell's (1948) conceptualization of the functions of communication. These functions--surveillance, correlation, and social transmission--have served as points of departure in the many more recent empirical investigations of gratifications

relevant to the seeking of information in a variety of contexts. Wright's (1960) contributions, which outlined the importance of the entertainment function as well as the notion of dysfunctions, added a sense of closure to Lasswell's formulation. Indeed, a good case can be made that almost all uses and gratifications studies have implicitly adopted some conceptualizations which may be traced to these notions. To be sure, some individual studies may have focused on one or another of these gratifications (Katz and Foulkes, 1962; Nordenstreng, 1970; Rosengren and Windahl, 1972; Stephenson, 1967), and other studies may have divided the "world of gratifications" in different categorical schemes (Blumler, Brown and McQuail, 1970; Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1973; Greenberg, 1974). But all of the conceptualizations used seem traceable, along some route, to Lasswell's and Wright's formulations. Even the currently popular notion of communication "avoidances" (Becker, 1979; Blumler and McQuail, 1968; McLeod and Becker, 1974; Levy, 1977) stems from Wright's concept of dysfunctions.

As a case in point, Blumler's (1979) most recent discussion of the role of theory in uses and gratifications studies has suggested a schema which encompasses the Lasswell/Wright formulation, albeit in a slightly restructured manner. Blumler's current conception outlines three orientations toward media: 1) cognitive, 2) diversion, and 3) personal identity. The cognitive orientation includes "surveillance" and "reality exploration" functions. Both these functions reflect general information seeking and are consonant with Lasswell's notion of surveillance of the environment. "Diversion" includes escape, entertainment and arousal functions, and can be directly linked to Wright's entertainment function.

The "personal identity" function can be linked to Lasswell's notions of correlation of the parts of society and social transmission. The personal identity function helps the individual establish a "social location" in relation to others through two interactive comparison processes which are derivative of the media experience. Through interaction with media characters, the individual gains a more global understanding of social location in society. Through interaction about media characters and events in conversations with friends and family, the individual gains a more localized understanding of social location within relevant peer groups. Both of these functions, related to personal identity, help the individual to correlate better the parts of society. In addition, the transmission of social values is inherent in the process of personal interaction. Also, by helping to place the individual into an identity which has a relationship to an environment, personal identity helps the individual to correlate parts of society in such a way that decisions about personal and public issues may be made. In other words, Blumler's current schema for gratifications remains surprising similarly to Lasswell and Wright's conception.

In reviewing the research relevant to our TV news interest area, we accepted one basic premise: conceptualizations of gratifications and the resultant dimensions in these studies were reduceable to the Lasswell and Wright formulation. The categories of gratifications used in this study are derived from a number of studies of uses and gratifications of television news and of political news (in newspapers and on television) in general. In this study no avoidance dimensions

were hypothesized. From the perspective of a gratifications sought vs. gratifications obtained approach, there is no reason to equate "avoidances" with "uses." In fact, we believe that the avoidance behavior (or dissatisfaction) can be more accurately measured as the discrepancy between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Five gratification dimensions were adopted in this study: 1) general information seeking, 2) decisional utility, 3) entertainment, 4) interpersonal utility, and 5) parasocial interaction.

1. General Information Seeking. This category includes the general "surveillance" notion that stems from a curiosity about one's environment. In a sense, it is information for information's sake as in Blumler's (1979) concept of "reality exploration." This information seeking dimension may be seen prominently in the political uses and gratifications studies, and is most clearly articulated by Blumler and McQuail (1968).

2. Decisional Utility. This dimension is most closely linked to the vote guidance functions used in political news studies (Blumler and McQuail, 1968; McLeod and Becker, 1974; Becker, 1979; Becker, Pepper, Wenner, and Kim, 1979; and others). Perhaps the clearest argument for the utility perspective comes from Swanson (1976) who suggests that information is attended to by individuals only because they believe it will prove useful for them. In other words, decisional utility represents specific seeking for information useful in decisions about personal or public issues.

3. Entertainment. This category is reflected in studies of political communication by gratification statements concerned with

the excitement or drama of election races (Blumler and McQuail, 1968; McLeod and Becker, 1974; and Becker, 1979). Studies more clearly directed at television news have called this dimension "diversion" (Levy, 1978) or "entertainment" (Wenner, 1977).

4. Interpersonal Utility. This category has been given a variety of names, including "anticipated communication" (McLeod and Becker, 1974); "conversation" (Wenner, 1977); "interpersonal utility" (Swanson, 1976); and "communicatory utility" (Atkin, 1972). Getting information which is perceived as useful in discussions with others may be seen to facilitate social transmission and help in the correlation process outlined by Lasswell.

5. Parasocial Interaction. This conception was first posited by Horton and Wohl (1956) who suggested that people maintain relationships with media personalities as if they were real people. Most often parasocial interaction has been investigated in isolation from other media functions (Rosengren and Windahl, 1972; Nordlund, 1978). It has been used implicitly in studies of television news (Levy, 1978, 1979), but its relationship to the social transmission and correlation functions of media has been overlooked. Only one study (Wenner, 1977) attempted specifically to understand parasocial interaction within the context of other gratifications. Here, parasocial interaction was found to be related to an affective style of vote guidance. Because so much emphasis is often placed on the personality of the newscaster we felt that the level of parasocial interaction obtained might distinguish among viewers of the different television news programs.

METHODOLOGY

Telephone interviews were obtained in November, 1978, from 327 heads of household in Lexington, Kentucky. Respondents' phone numbers were selected through systematic random sampling from the Lexington telephone directory. To qualify as a respondent, an individual had to watch at least one network evening newscast per week and have at least "fair" reception of all three network affiliates in the Lexington area.

Measurement

Uses and Gratifications. The 15 gratifications sought (GS) items are listed by hypothesized dimensions in Table 1. Gratifications sought were measured in the following manner: "We are (also) interested in why people watch TV news. Here are 15 reasons other people have given. As I read each reason, please tell me how much that reason applies to you. If the reason very definitely applies, give it a 5; if it does not apply at all, give it a 1; if it applies somewhere in between, give it a 2,3, or 4, depending on how much it applies." The respondent was then read the list of 15 GS items (randomly ordered) shown in Table 1.

Gratifications obtained (GO) were measured immediately after the gratifications sought. Respondents were instructed: "Now we'd like to know to what extent the network evening news programs provide you with some of the things we've just been talking about, when you get a chance to watch them... First, I want you to tell me how much each statement applies to the news program you ordinarily watch the most

(the "most-watched" program was determined earlier in the interview).[3] Then I want you to tell me how much you think that statement would apply to the other two news programs, if you had a chance to watch them more often."

Respondents then replied to the same 15 items (slightly reworded) used to measure GS. For example, for gratification 1, a CBS News viewer was read the statement. "CBS News helps me to keep up with current issues and events." The respondent replied using the same 5-point scale employed to measure GS. For the other two news programs, the respondent was then read the following statement twice in succession, with the name of the appropriate network inserted in the blank: "_____ news would help me to keep up with current issues and events." If the respondent had difficulty in answering this item, he/she was asked to give an estimate based on "what you think you know about the program." If the respondent still could not respond concerning a particular program, he was then asked only about the remaining programs.[4]

Other Measures. Ratings were obtained concerning the various anchorpersons on the three programs, the other news correspondents, program style or format, and quality of news coverage. Data were also gathered on who in the household usually made the primary decision to watch network news, total network news viewing, total television viewing, TV news dependency, attention to the newscast, political interest, political discussion, various media exposure measures, and demographic items. Certain of these variables will be explored in succeeding papers.

RESULTS

Individual Gratifications Sought vs. Gratifications Obtained

Four separate sets of correlations were obtained to test the relationship between each individual gratification sought and its corresponding obtained measure. First, for the entire sample (n=327) each gratification sought was correlated with its respective GO measure for the respondents' "most-watched" program. These correlations are shown in column 1 of Table 2. Next, GS vs. GO correlations for the most-watched program were computed for those 130 respondents who either could not respond to the GO items concerning their least-watched program(s) or who could not discriminate between their most-watched program and the other programs (see column 2 of Table 2). GS vs. GO correlations for the most-watched program were then obtained for those 197 respondents who were able to discriminate between most and least-watched programs (column 3 of Table 2). Finally, for these same 197 respondents GS vs. GO correlations were obtained for their least-watched program(s) (column 4).[5]

It is clear that there is a substantial and highly significant correlation between each GS measure and its respective GO index in every case considered in Table 2. Moreover, examination of the entire (15 x 15) GS vs. GO correlation matrix (not reported for space reasons) for each category of respondents in Table 2 reveals that the correlation between each GS and its <u>corresponding</u> GO for a particular gratification item is generally much stronger than the correlation between a particular GS measure and other <u>non-corresponding</u> GO measures. For example, in column 1 of Table 2 the correlation ($r = .61$) between the GS measure for

item 2 ("surprised by higher prices") and the GO index for that item is much stronger than any of the 14 correlations between the GS measure for this item and the GO measures for the other 14 items (e.g., GS for item 2 with GO for item 1, GO for item 3, etc.). The average of these non-corresponding correlations is only .27. This is typical of the pattern for all items, including the GS vs. GO correlations for the least-watched programs. The powerful uniformity of this finding is graphically illustrated by the fact that each of the 15 correlations in column 1 is the strongest correlation observed among the 15 possible GS vs. GO correlations for each item. In other words, GS1 correlated most strongly with GO1, GS2 correlated most strongly with GO2, etc., in 15 out of 15 cases.[6] Under the null hypothesis expectation that this should occur in only 1 of 15 comparisons, the chances of 15 out of 15 occurring are 1 in 4.26×10^{17}. In the other three columns in Table 2, where the smaller sample sizes introduce greater sampling error, this pattern is essentially repeated (14 of 15 in column 2, 13 of 15 in column 3, and 11 of 15 in column 4).[7]

This finding is, of course, highly consistent with the feedback model posited earlier. According to the model we would expect strong correlations between the GS index for a particular item and its respective GO index, but would not expect seeking of a particular gratification to be strongly correlated with the finding of other gratifications (unless, of course, these gratifications emerged on the same dimension as the particular gratification under consideration). Also, as posited earlier in connection with the model, while the GS vs. GO correlations for each individual gratification are moderate to strong, they are not nearly perfect.[8] Thus respondents in general are getting only partial satisfaction of their

various television news-related needs from specific programs.[9]

Inspection of the mean correlations for each column in Table 2 reveals another theoretically meaningful pattern. The highest mean GS vs. GO correlation ($\bar{X}$ = .60) is that involving the most-watched program GO measure for those 130 respondents who did not have meaningful responses for the least-watched programs. In general, these respondents are more dependent on a single news program (52% reported watching only one program) than those 197 respondents who were able to discriminate between most and least-watched programs (only 38% of these respondents watched only one program--difference significant at $p < .05$). We would thus expect the former group to rely more on their most-watched program (in 52% of the cases the only network news program they watch) to obtain the gratifications they are seeking. The GS vs. GO correlations (most-watched program) should thus be stronger for this group than for the group less dependent on a single program. This is, in fact, the case ($\bar{X}$ = .60 vs. $\bar{X}$ = .46). The difference between the two sets of correlations in columns 2 and 3 is significant at $p < .005$ by sign test.

In addition, we would expect programs defined as "least-watched" to be less effective sources of gratifications obtained than the most-watched programs. Feedback processes therefore, should result in weaker mean GS vs. GO correlations for least-watched programs. This mean correlation (see column 4 in Table 2) of .37 is in fact the weakest mean correlation in the table. The difference between the set of GS vs. GO (most-watched program) correlations in column 3 and the set of GS vs. GO (least-watched program) correlations in column 4 is also significant

at $p < .005$ by sign test. We therefore observe a pattern of decreasing GS vs. GO correlations with decreasing program dependency.

Factor Analyses

Six separate factor analyses were performed on the GS and GO items in order to examine: 1) the dimensions of GS and GO; and 2) the dimensions of GO for certain subsamples which could be developed according to viewing preference. In each of the six analyses, three factors were retained.[10] The percentage of the total variance accounted for by these three factors was 48.6% for the GS matrix, and ranged from 55.9% to 60.9% for the GO solutions. Table 3 shows the factor loadings for the GS items for the entire sample (n = 327), GO from the "most-watched program" (n = 327), and GO from the "least-watched program" (n = 197). Table 4 shows the factor loadings on GO items for persons knowledgeable (i.e., could make gratification obtained judgments) about ABC's World News Tonight (n = 270), CBS's Evening News (n = 305), and NBC's Nightly News (n = 285).

GS Factors. The factor structure obtained for the GS items (Table 3) was noticeably different from the factor structures obtained in any of the five GO analyses. The first factor combines items from three hypothesized dimensions--general information seeking, decisional utility, and interpersonal utility. The factor could be characterized as interpersonal utility-surveillance. While three of the five highest loadings on the factor are interpersonal utility items, the item receiving the highest loading was the decisional utility item which stressed the importance of finding out "about issues affecting people like myself." The factor structure suggests a cognitive orientation which links the need for interpersonal utility with information which has the individual as a

referent. This idea is also evidenced by the high loading of the parasocial interaction item "to compare my own ideas to what the commentators say" on this first factor.

The three entertainment items have the highest factor loadings on the second factor, making it quite clearly an entertainment seeking dimension. The third factor characterizes another personal orientation dimension--parasocial interaction. Two of the three hypothesized parasocial interaction items have highest loadings on this factor. The item which characterizes gratification seeking because "the reporters are like people I know" dominates the factor with a loading of .82, the highest item loading in this analysis.

GO Factors (most-watched program). The GS dimensions contrast with the GO dimensions for the respondents' most-watched program. The factor analysis (Table 3) showed a clear GO interpersonal utility factor (Factor I) emerging separate from either decisional utility or general information seeking. The three interpersonal utility items had the highest loadings on this factor. The parasocial interaction item, "compare ideas to commentators," also loaded highly. This finding suggests that internal "comparison" may be useful to one's external social interaction.

The second factor can be characterized as entertainment-parasocial interaction. The three entertainment items clearly have the highest loadings on the factor. They cluster with the parasocial interaction items related to the ability of the "newscasters (to) give a human quality to news and the "reporters (being) like people I know."

The third factor in this analysis is a surveillance factor which has five of the six statements from our hypothesized general information

seeking and decisional utility dimensions. Items which have more clearly a personal referent to information acquisition--"find out about issues affecting people like myself" and "(I) can trust the information"--define the surveillance gratification as one in which personal gratification takes precedence over, but is related to, a more general surveillance of the environment.

The similarities and differences between these first two factor analyses of GS and GO from the most-watched program are striking. For the most part, our hypothesized dimension items have their highest loading within the same factor. Only two items "wandered" into a factor different from what was hypothesized. Watching TV news in order not to "be surprised by higher prices and things like that" had fragmented loadings which distributed across the three factors in each analysis. In neither analysis did the item have its highest loading on a surveillance factor. Watching TV news to "compare ideas to what the commentators say" had relatively clear primary loadings on one factor in both analyses, but the one factor was an information utility factor in each case.

While our hypothesized dimensions did tend to cluster together within factor dimensions, they did not fall within the same dimensions in the GS and GO analyses. The GS analysis grouped interpersonal utility and surveillance together within one dimension, and split entertainment and parasocial interaction into two separate dimensions. The analysis of the GO from the most-watched program, on the other hand, grouped entertainment and parasocial interaction within one dimension and split interpersonal utility and surveillance into separate dimensions. That these similarities and differences between GS and GO proved to be consistent may be seen

even more clearly in the analyses of the GO from the least-watched program, and in the three analyses of GO from the three news programs.

GO Factors (least-watched program). The factor structure in the analysis of GO from the least-watched program (Table 3) was remarkably similar to that of GO from the most-watched program. The first factor was again interpersonal utility, the second factor was entertainment-parasocial interaction, and the third factor was surveillance. The only noticeable differences occurred in the shifting of primary loadings for some of the general information seeking and decisional utility items. Finding out about "issues affecting people like myself" and watching because "(I) can trust the information" were linked most prominently with a personally oriented surveillance factor. The general information seeking gratification associated with the need to "keep up with current issues and events" had prominent loadings split between surveillance and interpersonal utility. Watching TV news to "find out what kind of job our government officials are doing" shifted primary loadings from the surveillance factor in the GO from the most-watched program analysis to the interpersonal utility factor in the GO from the least-watched program analysis. Since this analysis employed the smallest n (197) of any of the six factor analyses, it is possible that these shifts are due to sampling error.

GO Factors (by network). The GO factor structures from the three network news programs (Table 4) are similar to the most-watched and least-watched solutions. In each of the three analyses, factors

characterizing entertainment-parasocial interaction, interpersonal utility, and surveillance emerged in relatively the same structure. The surveillance factor in each analysis was again personally oriented, and in each case finding out about "issues affecting people like myself" was the item having the highest loading on the factor. Once again, the general information seeking item which pointed to watching "so I won't be surprised by higher prices" had consistently fragmented loadings across factors, and never had its highest loading on the surveillance factor. Entertainment items again clustered with parasocial interaction items into a combined factor. The parasocial interaction item linking viewing to the "comparing of ideas to what the commentators say" was most frequently linked to interpersonal utility; however, in one case (the NBC analysis) its primary loading grouped it with the other hypothesized parasocial interaction items in a combined entertainment-parasocial interaction factor. In this case, however, the item's loadings distributed across the three factors.

Perhaps the most striking finding across the GO analyses was the consistency with which our hypothesized items had their primary loadings within the same factors. When added to the results from the GO analyses from most and least-watched programs, the three GO analyses for the three network news programs provide further evidence for the structure of gratifications obtained being stable within three consistently meaningful dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The findings lead to at least three major conclusions concerning the relationship between the gratifications which people seek from television news and those gratifications they report they obtain.

First, individual gratifications sought are moderately to strongly related to corresponding gratifications obtained. This, coupled with the generally much lower correlations observed between individual GS items and non-corresponding GO items provides support for a feedback model relating gratifications sought and obtained. In addition, the finding of moderate to strong, but not nearly perfect, GS vs. GO correlations is evidence against the teleological criticism that since a gratification is sought it must necessarily be obtained. Instead, we find that evening television news programs, while effective, are <u>imperfect</u> providers of news-related gratifications sought by audience members.

Second, the <u>degree of dependence</u> on a particular program is positively related to the strength of the GS vs. GO relationship. Degree of dependence, as used here, is similar to Rosengren and Windahl's (1972) concept which sees dependence as related to the availability of functional alternatives. In the case of television news programs, individuals who only watch a single news program are less aware of the functional alternatives. Thus, viewers of this single program necessarily would have their gratifications sought shaped more strongly by the gratifications obtained from this particular program. Viewers who watch more than one program obtain gratifications from a wider variety of sources and thus any single program would likely be inadequate in

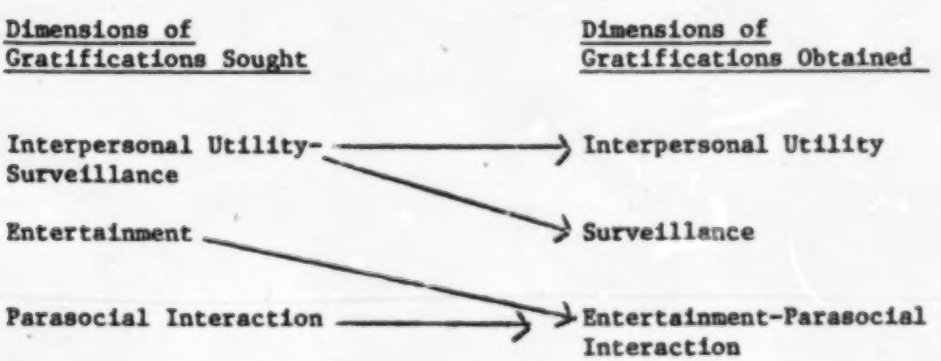
providing all the TV news-related gratifications these individuals are seeking. The findings here strengthen the theoretical rationale for the assumption that uses and gratifications are related to different media consumption behaviors.

Third, the dimensions of gratifications sought and obtained from television news, while similar, nevertheless differ in important ways. These differences are important theoretically and deserve close attention.

Dimensions of Gratifications Sought and Obtained

The relationship between the gratifications sought and obtained dimensions is illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2



The differences between the GS and GO matrices apparently are not due to between-program differences, since essentially the same factor patterns emerge for ABC, NBC, and CBS. The dimensional differences thus must be due to general within-program characteristics (e.g., content factors, narrative structure of stories, use of videotape, presence of vocal cues, eye contact) which are common to all of the programs. These program attributes are structural factors which influence gratifications obtained in consistent ways.

Entertainment-Parasocial Interaction. Apparently the seeking of entertainment and the seeking of parasocial interaction are independent motives for watching TV news. However, the obtaining of these gratifications from TV news is strongly related rather than independent. One possible explanation is that the extensive use of videotape to provide on-scene reports of events heightens the perceived entertainment and arousal value of TV news. At the same time, the videotaped appearances by correspondents and people involved in the news certainly gives a "human quality" to the news which strengthens parasocial involvement. The scenes of reporters talking to and interacting with ordinary people may also heighten the impression that these reporters are like "people I know." Thus the structure of TV news may result in the linking of entertainment and parasocial gratifications obtained.

Another plausible explanation involves the nonverbal cues (facial expressions, tone of voice, rate of speaking, etc.) transmitted by the anchorpersons and correspondents. Various studies of nonverbal communication have documented the importance of these cues in communicating affect, such as excitement or a sense of drama. At the same time, these cues are inseparably connected to the life-like visual image and voice of the newscaster. The realism associated with these elements undoubtedly enhances the ability of viewers to interact with the newscasters as if they were physically present.[11] These nonverbal cues, therefore, may promote both feelings of entertainment-arousal and perceptions of parasocial interaction.

If either or both of these explanations are valid, it would appear

that gratifications obtained, while certainly influenced by gratifications sought, are nonetheless sensitive to content and media characteristics. Our feedback model indicates that gratifications sought should also be influenced by structural characteristics of the communication experience. However, the finding that entertainment and parasocial interaction are independent motives for viewing television news indicates that these content-media attributes may be overridden by various social and psychological factors. Apparently, the seeking of entertainment and parasocial interaction are governed by different socio-psychological mechanisms. Research by Rosengren and Windahl (1972), Nordlund (1978), and Levy (1979) has identified some of the sociological factors which influence the seeking of parasocial interaction from the media. These factors are related to opportunities for interpersonal interaction. By comparison, seeking of entertainment from television news may be governed by a very different set of variables.

Surveillance - Interpersonal Utility. People apparently link the seeking of information from TV news about issues and events (for both general information and decision-making purposes) very closely with the process of disseminating this information through interpersonal channels. The ability of the media to "set the agenda" of such political discussion is well established, and conscious viewer awareness of this function may be the basis for the emergence of a single GS interpersonal utility-surveillance factor.

On the other hand, the finding of separate GO dimensions of surveillance and interpersonal utility indicates that viewers may

distinguish two types of TV news information--one kind principally valuable for making decisions about political issues, voting decisions, and informed political participation, and another type whose value is chiefly social. That the former is principally political information is supported by inspection of the general information seeking and decisional utility items.

Social information, by contrast, may involve essentially non-issue-related elements; e.g., information about accidents, natural disasters, popular non-political personalities, the personal lives of politicians, etc. Only one of the interpersonal utility dimension items (item 14, "compare my own ideas to what the commentators say") would seem to be manifestly political in nature (this item was not hypothesized to load on this factor and generally has the lowest loading on the various GO interpersonal utility factors reported in Tables 3 and 4). In any case, if viewers are in fact discriminating between two kinds of information in their perception of gratifications obtained, then the content characteristics of television news would appear to be at least partially responsible.

Implications for Theory and Research

The findings from this study indicate to us two major areas for further research. First, the dimensional differences between gratifications sought and obtained found in this study should be an area for further investigation and replication. Such studies are needed in order to understand the frequency with which and under what conditions such differences emerge. Are there certain types of audience members,

programs, content, and media which promote such differences? What are the characteristics of such programs, etc., which are responsible for differing patterns of gratifications sought and obtained?

Second, we need to explore further the relationship between gratifications sought and obtained and program or medium choice. One aspect of this relationship we intend to examine in a later paper is how the measures of gratifications sought and obtained in this study predict choice of news programs. Our analyses to this point indicate that program choice will be related to gratifications, but how strongly and in what manner remains to be seen.

Our findings so far indicate considerable promise for a sought vs. obtained conceptual approach to uses and gratifications. Many difficult conceptual and methodological issues remain to be resolved, but the distinction between what people seek from their communication experiences and what they actually procure would seem to be central to an understanding of a great portion of communication behavior.

NOTES

1. One recent study considered the discrepancy between gratifications sought and obtained. McLeod, Bybee, Durall, and Ziemke (1977) measured both the gratifications respondents said they were seeking from the 1976 Presidential debates and "debate helpfulness" in providing these gratifications. The discrepancies thus obtained were used in a descriptive manner, however, and were not tied directly to theoretical concerns.

2. We are still left, of course, with the problem of obtaining relatively "pure" measures of gratifications sought from television news in general. Responses to an item such as "I watch TV news to keep up with current issues and events" undoubtedly contain some mixture of gratifications sought and obtained. Isolating the components of this mixture may not be possible with present methodologies; however, it appears safe to assume that gratifications sought at least partially determine responses to such an item. On the other hand, responses to an item such as "CBS News helps me to keep up with current issues and events" clearly should be determined principally by viewer perceptions of gratifications obtained from CBS News. We therefore should be able to make valid comparisons between responses to the two types of measures.

3. Respondents were asked how many times on an "average Monday to Friday 5 day week" they watched ABC news, NBC news, and CBS news respectively. The program (or programs in the few cases of a tie) most frequently viewed was designated the "most-watch" program(s). The remaining two (in most cases) programs were designated "least-watched" programs for purposes of interviewing and data analysis.

4. One hundred ninety-seven of the 327 respondents were able to discriminate between their "most-watched" program and at least one "least-watched program." Sixty of the remaining 130 said they didn't know enough about their "least-watched" programs to reply. The remaining 70 respondents responded to the GO items concerning all three programs, but displayed little or no variance in between-program GO ratings. It was assumed that these respondents were answering primarily in terms of their most-watched program and thus their "least-watched" responses were treated as missing data.

5. Where a single program clearly emerged as the most-watched program in terms of the measure of viewing frequency (this was the case for the great majority of respondents) both of the remaining programs were defined as "least-watched" and the average GO for these 2 programs was used as the measure of GO for the least-watched programs. If a respondent could only respond to the GO items for a single least-watched program, the GO measure for this program was employed as the least-watched measure. If two programs tied for the most-watched program designation (this happened in only 40 cases), the average GO for these programs was used as the most-watched GO index.

Notes continued...

6. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1978,1979) found similar results in their study of public television viewing. In their study each GS correlated most strongly with its respective GO in 9 of 11 cases.

7. In all but one of the cases where the strongest correlation was not between the GS index for a particular item and its corresponding GO, the particular GO item which was responsible for the strongest correlation emerged on the same GO dimension (as the corresponding GO) in the factor analysis (reported later in the paper).

8. Some of this "imperfection" is, of course, due to measurement error.

9. This is supported by an analysis of the mean GS and GO measures for each item. The average discrepancy between GS and GO is ± 1 on the 5-point scale employed--a substantial difference. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1978,1979) found almost the same average GS-GO discrepancy in their study of public television viewing.

10. A principal components factoring method with iteration and communality estimates used in the diagonal of the correlation matrix was used with varimax rotation. A minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 was the criterion for factoring in our analyses and this yielded a three factor solution in all but one case. In this case, the GS analysis, a four factor solution resulted. However, only one item had its highest loading on the fourth factor. Since this left us with doubt about the meaningfulness of this factor, a three factor solution was substituted.

11. Nordlund (1978) states that certain media have a higher degree of "media interaction potential" than others. One factor in this potential is "the extent to which the medium is able to 'approximate' reality; that is to say, whether the medium is characterized by print or sound, still or moving pictures, only black and white or colours in various combinations" (p. 152).

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TABLE 1

Gratifications Sought Items
Listed by Hypothesized Dimensions

General Information Seeking

1. I watch TV news to keep up with current issues and events
2. I watch TV news so I won't be surprised by higher prices and things like that.
3. I watch TV news because you can trust the information they give you.

Decisional Utility

4. I watch TV news to find out what kind of job our government officials are doing.
5. I watch TV news to help me make up my mind about the important issues of the day.
6. I watch TV news to find out about issues affecting people like myself.

Entertainment

7. I watch TV news because its often entertaining.
8. I watch TV news because its often dramatic.
9. I watch TV news because its often exciting.

Interpersonal Utility

10. I watch TV news to support my own viewpoints to other people.
11. I watch TV news so I can pass the information on to other people.
12. I watch TV news to give me interesting things to talk about.

Parasocial Interaction

13. I watch TV news because the newscasters give a human quality to the news.
14. I watch TV news to compare my own ideas to what the commentators say.
15. I watch TV news because the reporters are like people I know.

Table 2

Correlations (Pearson r) of Gratification Sought Items with their Corresponding Gratification Obtained Items *

Gratification	GS vs. GO for "most-watched" program (all respondents: n = 327)	GS vs. GO for "most-watched" program (R's who did not respond to "least-watched" items: n = 130)	GS vs. GO for "most-watched" program (R's who also responded to "least-watched" items: n = 197)	GS vs. GO "least-watc program (n = 197)
1. Keep up with current issues/ events	.39	.55	.28	.20
2. Surprised by higher prices	.61	.70	.55	.53
3. Can trust information they give you	.53	.55	.51	.47
4. Find out about government officials	.46	.60	.35	.36
5. Make up mind about important issues	.52	.60	.44	.41
6. Find issues affecting people like myself	.60	.72	.49	.40
7. TV news is often entertaining	.54	.64	.48	.34
8. TV news is often dramatic	.36	.52	.21	.30
9. TV news is often exciting	.54	.50	.55	.38
10. Support viewpoints to other people	.55	.68	.45	.33
11. Pass information to other people	.55	.64	.47	.28
12. Gives me things to talk about	.62	.69	.58	.42
13. Newscasters give human quality to news	.55	.63	.48	.36
14. Compare own ideas to commentators	.46	.41	.48	.36
15. Reporters are like people I know	.58	.62	.55	.48
	$\bar{X}$ = .52	$\bar{X}$ = .60	$\bar{X}$ = .46	$\bar{X}$ = .37

*All correlations significant at $p < .001$

TABLE 3

Factor Matrices for Gratifications Sought From TV News Programs, Gratifications Obtained From Most-Watched News Program, Gratifications Obtained From Least-Watched Program

Gratifications	GS From TV News (N = 327)			GO Most-Watched (N = 327)			GO Least-Watched (N = 197)		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
1. Keep up with current issues/events	.38	-.14	.01	.14	.11	.51	.41	.05	.42
2. Surprised by higher prices	.30	.44	.31	.42	.38	.35	.42	.37	.20
3. Can trust information they give you	.37	.32	.18	.15	.20	.58	.20	.26	.54
4. Find out about government officials	.32	.06	.19	.21	.22	.51	.62	.07	.27
5. Make up mind about important issues	.52	.20	.22	.39	.08	.52	.23	.17	.52
6. Find issues affecting people like myself	.63	.15	.10	.33	.21	.63	.17	.17	.92
7. TV news is often entertaining	.05	.49	.17	.26	.66	.14	.42	.60	.01
8. TV news is often dramatic	.09	.58	.18	.23	.71	.10	.33	.64	.13
9. TV news is often exciting	.16	.67	.11	.18	.72	.37	.10	.75	.31
10. Support viewpoints to other people	.53	.34	.06	.59	.21	.37	.63	.31	.15
11. Pass information to other people	.56	.39	.13	.67	.30	.24	.61	.36	.19
12. Gives me things to talk about	.49	.41	.16	.67	.28	.24	.57	.41	.27
13. Newscasters give human quality to news	.22	.21	.54	.40	.46	.35	.44	.55	.11
14. Compare own ideas to commentators'	.38	.21	.20	.55	.34	.23	.60	.27	.25
15. Reporters are like people I know	.14	.25	.82	.30	.43	.29	.12	.56	.27

NOTE: Underlined entries indicate primary factor loadings or major secondary loadings for each item.

TABLE 4

Factor Matrices for Gratifications Obtained From ABC News Gratifications Obtained From CBS News Gratifications Obtained From NBC News

Gratifications	GO ABC News (N = 270)			GO CBS News (N = 305)			GO NBC News (N = 285)		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
1. Keep up with current issues/events	.04	.23	.56	.10	.12	.42	.10	.61	.11
2. Surprised by higher prices	.42	.42	.30	.36	.41	.35	.42	.29	.42
3. Can trust information they give you	.34	.16	.58	.16	.15	.54	.29	.58	.14
4. Find out about government officials	.23	.41	.49	.13	.19	.42	.26	.57	.20
5. Make up mind about important issues	.14	.33	.58	.04	.39	.57	.15	.52	.34
6. Find issues affecting people li e myself	.33	.19	.72	.20	.27	.64	.23	.69	.28
7. TV news is often entertaining	.60	.40	.13	.66	.26	.02	.67	.15	.29
8. TV news is often dramatic	.68	.25	.07	.72	.17	.10	.73	.09	.21
9. TV news is often exciting	.74	.14	.30	.69	.16	.34	.72	.28	.18
10. Support viewpoints to other people	.25	.71	.31	.23	.57	.32	.29	.43	.53
11. Pass information to other people	.32	.65	.27	.25	.69	.30	.28	.21	.73
12. Gives me things to talk about	.31	.57	.35	.30	.65	.30	.33	.27	.63
13. Newscasters give human quality to news	.48	.45	.30	.45	.32	.35	.60	.33	.26
14. Compare own ideas to commentators	.33	.47	.27	.33	.50	.24	.42	.31	.36
15. Reporters are like people I know	.54	.24	.23	.45	.23	.28	.56	.27	.18

NOTE: Underlined entries indicate primary factor loadings or major secondary loadings for each item.